



ANNUAL REPORT

for the fiscal years

1994 - 1998



Advisory Council
on the Status
of Women

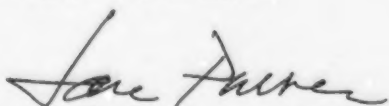


The Honourable J. James Kinley
Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia

Sir:

I have the honour to submit the report of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women for the period April 1, 1994 to March 31, 1998.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jane Purves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Purves".

Jane Purves
Minister in Charge of Administration
of the Advisory Council on the Status
of Women Act

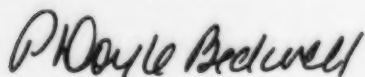


The Honourable Jane Purves
Minister in Charge of Administration
of the Advisory Council on the
Status of Women Act

Madam:

On behalf of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women,
I am pleased to present you with our report covering the period April 1,
1994 to March 31, 1998.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "P Doyle Bedwell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, LL.B.
Chair



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Since our last report, the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women has absorbed the Women's Directorate, strengthening abilities in policy and research, information and education, and community development.

Council has taken on numerous responsibilities and commitments enhancing representation of women. We realized the importance of providing services to a diverse community by bringing together the experiences of women of various backgrounds—women with disabilities, women who are Black, lesbian, rural, or Native, and women who are single parents—women who can shape our direction as we strive to achieve equality for all women in Nova Scotia.

As Chair and spokesperson for Council, my responsibility is to guarantee that our mandate is reflected in our programs and activities. With the assistance of our staff, we have researched and developed eight briefs and submissions such as *Women & Social Security, Maintenance Enforcement, and Women and the Legal System*. These public documents express Council's opinion on these matters as they relate to the impact they have on women.

With the ongoing support of our many and varied stakeholders, we have successfully collaborated on studies and tours, workshops, conferences, and major forums such as the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Conference and the Indonesian Study Tour.

The challenges ahead are broad. As a provincial agency, we face many economic constraints but Council will continue to represent as fully as possible the concerns and aspirations of Nova Scotia women. If we are to make any equality gains for women, we must continue to build partnerships and alliances with new groups and women's organizations and those with whom we already work.

We look forward to continued support from Nova Scotians as we strive to advance equality, fairness, and dignity for all Nova Scotia women.

Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, LL.B.
Chair

BACKGROUND

In April 1975, the Government of Nova Scotia appointed a seven-member Task Force on the Status of Women and instructed them to study the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970) with particular reference to those recommendations within provincial jurisdiction; to report to the government on the status of women in the province; and to recommend to Government actions needed to improve the status of women in Nova Scotia. This report is summed up in the publication *Herself/Elle-Même* (1976).

The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1977 to educate the public and advise the provincial government on issues of interest and concern to women.

The mandate of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women is defined by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act, which was first passed in 1977. The mandate and powers of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, set out in section 4, are to

- advise the Minister upon such matters relating to the status of women as are referred to the Council for consideration by the Minister
- bring to the attention of the Minister matters of interest and concern to women.

The Council has powers to:

- receive and hear petitions and suggestions concerning the status of women
- undertake and recommend research on matters relevant to the status of women
- recommend and participate in programs concerning the status of women
- publish reports, studies, and recommendations
- propose legislation, policies and practices to promote equality of opportunity and status

The Advisory Council works to make sure that issues affecting the lives of Nova Scotia women become part of the government's plan. Our concerns touch all areas of women's lives, including paid and unpaid

work, family life, health, education, legal rights, and experiences of discrimination and violence.

In 1996, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Women's Directorate merged, strengthening organizational capacity in policy and research, information and education, as well as community development and rural outreach.

Council members come from across Nova Scotia and have been chosen for their interest and involvement in women's issues in their communities. Since the merger, Council has eight full-time staff members in the Halifax office and four part-time field workers in other areas of the province.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Biographical information is current for the reporting period.

CAPE BRETON REGION



Patricia Flynn is from Sydney. She has a bachelor of business administration degree and has been a volunteer for the past 12 years in various organizations related to persons with disabilities. She was vice-president of the Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities and Represented the Cape Breton Region from 1996 to 1998.



Carolyn DiPenta Rizzetto lives in New Waterford and has a bachelor of arts degree in community studies from University College of Cape Breton and St. Francis Xavier University. She brought to Council 27 years of volunteer experience working with women on low incomes and families living in poor housing conditions. In 1994, she received a Community Service Award for her community work with the needy and she has been involved with the Red Cross for the past 30 years. She was the first female town counsellor in New Waterford. Represented the Cape Breton Region from 1996 to 1998.



Marcie Shwery-Stanley of Sydney is a Communications Officer with Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation. She chaired the Task Force on the Economic Integration of Women with Disabilities in Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Partnership Committee on Entrepreneurship and Persons with Disabilities, and co-chaired the Industrial Cape Breton Disabled Persons Employment Committee. Ms Shwery-Stanley is actively involved in the organization of Women in Business Conferences held in Cape Breton and was named 1993 Woman of the Year by the Business and Professional Women's Club of Sydney. She is a former member of the Sydney Human Rights Affirmative Action Committee and past president of Community Involvement of the Disabled Society. Represented the Cape Breton Region from 1994 to 1998.

CENTRAL REGION

Elizabeth Blanchette is an electronic engineer. Working in a male-dominated profession has motivated her to become involved in women's issues. She is a past member of Women in Science and Engineering and the Regional Women's Advisory Council for the Coast Guard and has co-chaired the board for Alice Housing. Her primary interests are in breaking the isolation for women in non-traditional jobs and in advancing women in technology. Represented the Central Region from 1996 to 1998.



Patricia Doyle-Bedwell is a Mi'kmaq woman, a mother, a teacher, and a student. In 1993, she graduated from Dalhousie Law School as one of the first of five Mi'kmaq women to do so. In the past she has worked in the areas of child welfare law and policy, land claims, and the criminal justice system. Main areas of interest are issues relating to Aboriginal women. Professor Doyle-Bedwell is Director of the Transition Year Program at Dalhousie University. Previously, she was an Assistant Professor of Law at Dalhousie University and the Acting Director of the Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq Program. She is a Justice Commissioner of the Mi'kmaq Justice Institute. She has been re-elected Chair of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Represented the Central Region from 1994 to 1998.



Sharon Heading lives in Wellington, Halifax County. Her background is in the hospitality industry and, more recently, with not-for-profit organizations. She has worked for the United Way and for the Lung Association of Nova Scotia. Sharon has worked extensively in the volunteer sector, including the YWCA and the 1994 Special Olympics. She is a business owner and consultant for not-for-profit organizations. Represented the Central Region from 1996 to 1998.



Katherine McDonald was appointed as council president from August 1993 through July 31, 1996. A native of Halifax, she worked as a lawyer specializing in family law for 10 years before becoming executive director of the Public Legal Education Society of Nova Scotia in 1991. She was a member of the Nova Scotia Law Reform Commission's advisory group on administrative tribunals and the Tripartite Sub-Committee on Aboriginal Justice. As well, she served

on the gender equality committee and the spousal homicide study advisory committee of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice. Katherine has a long-standing commitment to reproductive health and attended the fifth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing with the sponsorship of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Represented the Central Region from 1994 to 1996.



Donna Marshall of Dartmouth was a project coordinator/facilitator at the North End Parent Resource Centre and a former researcher with Planned Parenthood Nova Scotia. She is a founding member of the Low-Income Network Committee (LINC) and an advocate in the Black community on behalf of single parents. Represented the Central Region from 1994 to 1996.

FUNDY REGION



Jean Knockwood lives in Shubenacadie. She holds a master's degree in public administration. For nine years she was a Native Education Counsellor at Dalhousie University, actively recruiting members of the Native community to enroll in programs offered by the university. She was vice-president of the Union of Nova Scotia Indians and sat on the Board of Governors at Mount Saint Vincent University. She is School Manager of the Indian Brook School. Represented the Fundy Region

from 1996 to 1998.



Jackie Nibby of Indian Brook, Hants County, was director of Diversion and Native Justice Programming with the Shubenacadie Band First Nation Mi'kmaq. She is a former program officer and social worker with MicMac Family and Children's Services. Represented the Fundy Region from 1994 to 1995.



Colleen O'Connor is from Truro. While attending university, she worked summers as a parole officer for Correctional Services, and now works for Access Nova Scotia in their Truro office. As well, she has been a facilitator for Race Relations and Employment Equity training within the Civil Service. Represented the Fundy Region from 1996 to 1998.

HIGHLAND REGION



Ann MacDonald of New Glasgow is a business woman whose background includes work in the airline and tourism industries. She served as a volunteer member of the Board of Directors of Business Opportunities for Pictou County. Represented the Highland Region from 1996 to 1998.



Doreen Paris of New Glasgow was employed with the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University. She is active in the Pictou County Women's Centre, and past president of Tearmann Society for Battered Women. She was provincial president of the African United Baptist Association Women's Institute, and received certification as a Black legal advocate. Doreen's contributions to her community have been recognized by the New Glasgow Volunteer of the Year

Award and the YWCA Women of Distinction Award. Represented the Highland Region from 1994 to 1998.

SOUTH SHORE REGION

Dianne Crowell of Glenwood, Yarmouth County, operates a fish-processing business and was recognized as the Atlantic Canada Woman Entrepreneur of the Year in 1992. She has served on the boards of the Women's Health Education Network, the Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia, and the Association of Atlantic Women Business Owners and is a co-founder of the Jane Hurshman Memorial Fund. Represented the South Shore Region from 1994 to 1998.



Karen Field is from Bridgewater and is a licensed physiotherapist certified in acupuncture. She is immediate past president and director on the national board representing Nova Scotia for the Canadian Physiotherapy Association. Karen has been involved in various community organizations such as the Arthritis Society, and has also served on the province's Pay Equity Commission. Represented the South Shore Region from 1996 to 1998.



Lisa Richard lives in Clare. She holds a bachelor's degree in public relations from Mount Saint Vincent University and worked towards an MBA during her time with the Advisory Council. She is General Director of l'Institut de développement communautaire in Pointe-de-l'Église. Her focus is on economic development issues. She worked closely with l'Association des Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse and represented the South Shore Region from 1996 to 1998.

VALLEY REGION

Darlene Lawrence of Bear River, Digby County, is coordinator of the Digby County Family Resource Centre. She is a board member of the Digby-Clare Business Development Centre and a school council member. She was a counsellor and board member of Interval House in Ottawa and a volunteer at Adsum House in Halifax, both emergency shelters for women and children. Represented the Valley Region from 1994 to 1998.

MISSION, GOALS, AND CORE FUNCTIONS

OUR MISSION

To advance equality, fairness, and dignity for all women in Nova Scotia.

OUR GOALS

- To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities, with particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status.
- To advise on ways in which legislation and government policies and programs can advance equality for women in Nova Scotia.
- To promote women's economic equality.
- To reduce violence against women in communities, workplaces, and families.
- To improve the health and well-being of women and their families.

OUR CORE FUNCTIONS

Research and Policy Development

The Council advises the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women on the concerns and priorities of women and formulates strategies and options to address these. Staff conduct quantitative and qualitative research in consultation with community groups and government departments to make sure that our advice is a feasible, relevant, timely, and accurate guide to government action.

Information and Communication Services

The Advisory Council collects and disseminates information on women's issues to the Minister, Council, staff, and other key stakeholders including the media and the general public. Through a comprehensive communications strategy, Council informs and influences key stakeholders about issues and concerns affecting women; Council and government priorities; activities and accomplishments; and about opportunities for improvement in addressing women's issues.

Rural Outreach and Community Liaison

Through Council members and fieldwork staff, the Advisory Council brings forward concerns of women from across Nova Scotia, with particular attention to historically disadvantaged groups. Council also partners with communities, organizations, and agencies to advance equality for women in programs and services.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal: To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities, with particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status.

1994-95

The Advisory Council undertook an extensive, two-phase consultation process with former presidents, interested individuals, and women's and community groups to obtain input on its effectiveness in promoting equality for women in Nova Scotia, to solicit new ideas on how to reach the Council's goal of advancing the status of women, and to develop a vision and statement of purpose for the Advisory Council. Focus groups were held in numerous locations across the province between September 1993 and March 1994. The consultations included women from the Acadian, Black, disabled, immigrant, lesbian, and Native communities as well as women from a broad range of age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. The report, *Who Will Speak for Us?*, documented the results of this consultation.

Acting on recommendations in *Who Will Speak for Us?*, Council recommended that government put in place a more accountable and transparent appointment process.

In addition, Council undertook a strategic planning process to encourage greater diversity in representation on Council and to ensure that the issues affecting women from different regions of Nova Scotia, women with disabilities, Black women, lesbians, Native women, and low-income women would be integrated into the Council's work to achieve equality for all women in Nova Scotia. As a result of these changes in the process, seven new Council members from diverse cultural communities and backgrounds were appointed to Council in August.

A survey was conducted on whether the newsletter was a useful vehicle of communication. Many women said they had missed the newsletter and looked forward to its return. Most responded that they were interested in hearing about Council's work and in seeing columns about the work of other women's groups across the province. Women saw the newsletter as a way of being connected and involved with

women's issues, or to simply be a visible sign of support and solidarity. Building on input from women across the province, the first issue of *Women's Writes* was distributed in mid-February.

As a result of better representation on Council of women from diverse backgrounds and experience, members participated in a series of meetings to discuss cross-cultural communication and issues affecting women from diverse populations. In addition, field workers participated in workshops on lesbian issues, prostitution, and Native issues.

Council supported women's groups and agencies that primarily serve women in their attempts to bring funding issues to the attention of government.

Council provided support to a group from North Preston that organized a dinner to honour Evangeline Cain-Grant, the first resident of North Preston to be called to the bar.

During the year, fieldwork staff participated in many local events and committees and mounted several displays about the work of Council.

To address the gender disparities in participation, Council developed a recruitment campaign to actively encourage women to apply for appointment to Nova Scotia government agencies, boards, and commissions.

The president of Council did numerous media interviews on issues affecting women, and the president, Council members, or staff participated in various conferences and consultation processes and sat on several committees and boards, including Voluntary Planning and the Women's Reference Group of the Nova Scotia Labour Force Development Board.

Participation of Young Women

Council continued its work to address issues affecting young women and to encourage their participation. Council's Resource Library facilitated the collection of background material on young women from diverse groups, focusing on issues such as dating violence and the participation of young women in information technology. The fieldwork coordinator also met with young women in various regions to determine their interest in participating in a Young Women's Council.

In a joint initiative with the Women's Directorate, Council organized and participated in *Take Your Daughters to Work Day*. This event, promoted to businesses and schools throughout the province, encourages young women to be part of the workforce of tomorrow.

1995-96

Council published *Letting in a Little Light: Lesbians and Their Families in Nova Scotia*. The publication was based on focus groups and individual interviews involving 46 lesbians from across the province. It documents first-person accounts of lesbians' daily lives in their families and explores the positive aspects of these relationships as well as the pain women experience in a society that is largely intolerant and homophobic. Copies were distributed to women's centres, community organizations, and school guidance counsellors across the province. Requests for the publication have come from Sweden and the Netherlands, as well as across Canada and the United States.

In certain regions of the province, fieldworkers conducted cross-cultural awareness workshops for the Department of Community Services.

Council assisted in the development of a support group for Aboriginal and Black students at Dalhousie University and helped various women's organizations, such as the African United Baptist Association Women's Institute, Tearmann Society Board, and the Pictou County Women's Centre, in addressing issues of concern. Council members participated in several conferences, meetings, and other activities, such as the Native Women's Conference at Mount Allison University, Gay Pride March, and in the conference and annual meeting of the Association of Atlantic Women Business Owners in Halifax. They also presided over the successful launch of the Jane's Fund audiotape *Positive and Healing Stories*.

1996-97

In response to requests from women, the Advisory Council established a circulation policy for the Resource Centre to begin lending items to women's organizations who registered with the librarian.

The Chair and individual Council members attended several conferences such as the Public Health Association of Nova Scotia

conference and the IWK Grace Nurses' Conference as participants or panellists. Members were also involved with several events sponsored by women's organizations. Along with a number of women's organizations, Council participated in regional consultations held by Status of Women Canada to determine the future and goals of the SWC Women's Program.

1997-98

In partnership with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, the Inverary Resort, and Human Resources Development Canada, Council hosted a three-day provincial women's forum—Challenge to Change—in Baddeck. The forum was coordinated by the fieldwork staff in conjunction with external funding partners and regional volunteers. The conference brought together a wide cross-section of women from across the province and from various sectors. Participants shared information, discussed critical issues, and formulated strategies and recommendations in four major areas: Women and the Economy, Women and Education, Women and Health, and Women, Human Rights, and the Law. A report on the conference, *Challenge to Change*, which included a summary of the discussion and recommendations, was circulated to participants and distributed widely.

Council organized two workshop sessions with women's centres. The purpose was to clarify the interests, roles, and responsibilities of the women's centres and the Advisory Council with a view to opening up communication and to identify future opportunities for cooperation.

Council partnered with the Standing Your Ground Association to bring one of the world leaders of the women's movement, Betty Friedan, to Halifax, for a fund-raising lecture. Creating the foundation, and having Betty Friedan speak in Halifax, was a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness around new thinking on issues of aging and to raise money to fund efforts to change mind-sets and values around aging and programs for women over 60.

Participation of Young Women

Hopes, Dreams & Directions, a series of day-long forums involving young women, was a successful new Advisory Council initiative to follow up on consultations with young women in 1995-96. The first forum, *Hopes, Dreams & Directions—20 Years From Now*, was held in Metro Halifax in

conjunction with International Women's Day and to celebrate Council's 20th anniversary. Delegations from all Metro-area high schools participated. Young women were encouraged to think about issues like economic equality, health and well-being, and violence and to discuss how these can be addressed.

Participants overwhelmingly reported an increased awareness and new-found inspiration and energy to meet equality issues head-on. Council conducted similar sessions with other high schools across the province—all met with an enthusiastic reception.

Goal: To advise on ways in which legislation, government policies, and programs can advance equality for women in Nova Scotia.

1994-95

The president of the Advisory Council participated at preparatory meetings for the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in New York, March 12–April 6, 1995. Women representing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all over the world met in advance of an official UN session to discuss the 10 critical areas of concern that would be on the agenda at the World Conference in Beijing, September 4–15.

This parallel process of NGO lobbying has become an integral part of UN world conferences and has led to many changes for women in recent years, including regarding women's rights as human rights and developing international commitments on violence against women. NGO delegates worked with the Canadian official delegation to develop language to strengthen the Platform for Action that would be the subject of further discussion and negotiation at the 1995 world conference.

Council provided in-kind support for a conference and workshops organized by the Nova Scotia Ad Hoc Committee on Social Security Reform. The committee wanted to bring to the attention of women the issues and processes involved in the federal government's Social Security Reform review process. Council also helped the Committee and women's groups to coordinate presentations to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources Development.

The four Atlantic Advisory Councils on the Status of Women were involved in independent research projects to inform a joint submission to the parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources Development which was conducting hearings on social security reform. Called *Women and Social Security Reform*, the joint submission described women's experiences with a variety of social programs as they exist and discussed the fear that the reforms would result in the dismantling of our social programs. The joint submission argued for the need to improve the employment situation and the social security net for women through job creation, training programs, unemployment insurance, and child care.

Council provided advice and support for the development of a new drug rehabilitation program specifically designed for women.

1995-96

The president of Council participated in meetings to support the Family Violence Action Committee of the Department of Justice. She also represented Council on the Family Violence Prevention Initiative.

Council hosted meetings and planned a one-day workshop on the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in association with the Beijing Women's Action Network. Twelve women from Nova Scotia, including the president of Council in her capacity as a representative of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, travelled to Beijing in September 1995 to attend the NGO World Forum as representatives of organizations or as non-affiliated individuals or to attend the world conference as official government representatives.

On their return, delegates shared their experiences at a reception at Province House hosted by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Council participated in numerous events organized by community groups and government, including a panel on child welfare organized by the Department of Community Services.

1996-97

Building on the consultation process for *Who Will Speak for Us?* (1994-95), Council undertook a strategic planning process and

developed goals, strategies, and objectives for the agency. This process formed the basis for the plans of action for the years 1996-97 to 1999-2000.

Council prepared a paper for the Department of Labour on the minimum wage and its impact on domestic workers. Council supported the minimum wage legislation and used gender-based analysis to support covering domestic workers in the legislation. The paper recommended that domestic workers should be covered by minimum wage legislation and that the full cost of employing domestic workers primarily for child care or elder care should be allowable as a tax deduction.

Council published and presented a Brief on Employment Insurance Reform (Bill C-12) to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources. Bill C-12 proposed significant changes to employment insurance (EI). In the context of high unemployment, especially in coastal and rural communities in Nova Scotia, the brief focused on the effects the proposed changes would likely have on women as individual workers (especially those in part-time, low-waged, seasonal, and unstable jobs), and the overall impact of the legislation on women and their families. Council argued that the changes would make it more difficult for participants in the new EI program to become eligible for benefits and would result in reduced benefits. Council was also concerned about the erosion of gains made in the area of maternal and paternal benefits. Several recommendations were made to government to reconsider the legislation and the main philosophy behind it.

Council also provided input on the Child Support Guidelines, which were introduced by the federal government in the spring, and on the provincial Maintenance Enforcement Program.

1997-98

In May the Advisory Council joined with Women's Programs, Status of Women Canada, to assist the Women's Reference Group of the Nova Scotia Labour Force Development Board and members of the Women's Action Coalition to organize a consultation on the effects of recent cuts and changes to social programs. *Standing Up and Speaking Out: Women Reshaping the Public Agenda*, was designed to identify issues, develop strategies, and make recommendations to government to address some current concerns. It focused on three areas: post-

secondary education and training, social assistance policies and programs, and funding to women's groups and agencies that primarily serve women. A follow-up to the consultation included the release of a full report and the organization of a coalition of women's groups to advocate for their implementation.

Council presented a brief to the annual hearings of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance. The Advisory Council was referenced in a final consultation of the Standing Committee report. The brief focused mainly on the need for government to strengthen social programs. It also advocated for a fair and progressive tax system as a crucial component in setting a new direction for equity and fairness for the 21st century.

Nova Scotia hosted the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women 16th Annual Conference on October 30-31, 1997. Co-chairs were the federal and Nova Scotia Status of Women Ministers.

The meeting released *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, a set of benchmarks that measure total workload, including paid and unpaid work, as well as gender differences in the areas of income, work, and learning. The indicators are an effective tool for analysing policy from a gender perspective, such as in analysing pension reform or labour market strategies.

The ministers also discussed and shared information about other initiatives in their jurisdictions, especially collaborative approaches to addressing violence and increasing women's access to justice.

During their stay, ministers and delegates had a chance to meet with members of the women's community at a reception at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Council provided input during federal government consultations on the proposed Seniors' Benefit and prepared a report to the provincial Minister Responsible for the Status of Women on its implications for women. The federal government proposal to combine GIS and OAS into a new Seniors' Benefit and base this on family income was subsequently dropped.

Council also prepared and delivered a brief on the Calgary Declaration on National Unity.

Goal: To promote women's economic equality**1994-95**

Council actively supported and participated in a Women in Business conference and trade show in Sydney, Cape Breton.

The Council fieldwork program partnered with Dr. Marguerite Cassin, Dalhousie University School of Business and Public Administration, to assist a women's group in Cumberland County in organizing and developing a Women in the Economy Project. The project was delivered with funding assistance from HRDC. Following training sessions on women in the economy, participants produced an economic study of their local area, held a series of community workshops around the province, helped to organize a conference on women in the economy at Dalhousie University, and developed a series of demonstration projects on community economic development in the Cumberland County area. The project was cited as a best practice in *Meeting Women's Training Needs: Case Studies in Women's Training*, prepared for the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Joint Working Group of Status of Women and Labour Market Officials on Education and Training, which met in December 1994.

Council participated in a conference on *Women, Men and the Economy: Community Economic Development*, sponsored by the Gender, Equality and Management Studies Group (GEMS), Faculty of Management at Dalhousie University. The conference discussed community-based economic development as a strategy that is essential to the creation of sustainable communities in Atlantic Canada.

1995-96

Council assisted university students who are also single mothers and who were facing cut-backs from the Student Aid Program in developing a lobbying strategy.

Council helped the Women's Reference Group of the Nova Scotia Labour Force Development Board to organize a consultation with women's groups on the inclusion of women in provincial community economic development structures, policies, and programs.

Council again participated in *Take Our Daughters to Work Day*. This successful annual event once more received positive feedback from participating organizations. Young women need role models in the workforce. By taking our daughters to work, we help them see available opportunities and prepare for their careers. Council organizes this event by sending out flyers to publicize the day, suggesting how events can be organized and showing why this day is as important for boys as it is for girls. Participation has increased dramatically with active participation from banks, other businesses and industries, and government.

1996-97

Council provided in-kind support for the development of a proposal, *Counting Women In*, for a project to include women in economic development. The project was sponsored by the Women for Economic Equality (WEE) committee, which included representatives from the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Women's Reference Group of the Nova Scotia Labour Force Development Board, Women's Centres CONNECT!, and other women's organizations. The committee came together as a result of a consultation on community economic development in January 1996, organized by the Women's Reference Group. Participants at the consultation had identified the lack of women's participation and inclusion in community economic development structures and programs as a major problem that needed to be addressed.

1997-98

With the assistance of Dal Legal Aid, Advisory Council field work staff delivered eight information sessions on social assistance in different locations in the province. The sessions were organized in response to social assistance reform and restructuring and the growing number of complaints and inquiries received from women and the organizations that serve them. Sessions were designed for women in receipt of benefits, and sought to identify the problems and issues women were facing, discuss individuals' basic rights, the appeal process, and how to do advocacy work. As a result of the eight sessions, self-help and support groups were formed in Yarmouth, Sydney, Truro, and New Glasgow.

During the spring, the Advisory Council and the Nova Scotia Petroleum Directorate teamed up with Sable Offshore Energy Inc. (SOEI) to inform women about the new and exciting career opportunities

opening up for them in the emerging offshore gas and petroleum industry. The partnership delivered four successful information sessions, in Guysborough, Sydney, and Halifax. The sessions publicized the fact that qualified women would be needed for all areas of the petroleum industry as it grows, and women are also encouraged to identify and take advantage of any spin-off opportunities.

Council facilitated meetings between the International Longshoreman's Association (Halifax local), the employer, Women in Trades and Technology, HRDC, and the Canadian Human Rights Commission to discuss employment equity processes and the need to increase the number of women employed in the longshore industry. The process of educating employees on diversity issues, with special attention to gender, has begun.

Council hosted and provided in-kind support for *Counting Women In*, a project developed by Women for Economic Equality and funded jointly by Nova Scotia Economic Renewal Agency, Status of Women Canada (Women's Program), and Human Resources Development Canada.

The project was designed to take a woman-centred community development approach to community economic development (CED). The project team organized and delivered workshops for women in each of the 16 Nova Scotia Regional Development Authority (RDA) areas. These were designed to build interest and awareness about CED among women in local communities and to encourage the organization of local support networks of women who were interested in developing CED skills and opportunities. The project helped women identify creative and sustainable solutions to business and employment loss in local communities. At the same time, the process identified barriers that discouraged women's participation in current CED programs.

Following the success of this project, WEE developed a proposal for a longer-term, more in-depth strategy to support and strengthen women's CED networks and to provide more information, training, and assistance to women who want to be involved in CED.

Goal: To reduce violence against women in communities, workplaces, and families.

1994-95

Field workers held train-the-trainer workshops in several schools and RCMP detachments around the province to assist participants in understanding and identifying sexual harassment in their organizations and to deliver their own training sessions to employees and students.

The NSACSW coordinated the governmental component of the annual Purple Ribbon campaign to increase awareness of violence against women and to raise additional funds for transition houses and women's centres. A total of 25 government departments and agencies participated in the Halifax metropolitan area. Departments made ribbons and donation boxes available in government offices to employees who wished to participate. All contributions received for ribbons were forwarded to the Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia.

1995-96

The president of the Advisory Council was invited by the Minister of Justice to serve on the Family Violence Action Committee.

Council organized workshops in different regions of the province on the recently published results from three research projects on family violence: *From Rhetoric to Reality: Ending Domestic Violence in Nova Scotia*, by the Law Reform Commission; *The Response of the Justice System to Family Violence in Nova Scotia*, by the Department of Justice Family Tracking Project; and *Changing Perspectives: A Case Study of Intimate Partner Homicides in Nova Scotia*, by St. Francis Xavier University Extension Division. Individuals and organizations involved in working to end spousal violence attended the workshops.

Council again coordinated the government component of the Purple Ribbon campaign.

1996-97

Field work staff organized and delivered a series of workshops on dating violence which were held in Digby, Truro, Halifax, Sydney, and Lunenburg County. The workshops discussed the dynamics of violent

relationships and explored the barriers to providing appropriate and effective responses by organizations, communities, and society as a whole to violence against women. Participants had an opportunity to discuss initiatives currently in place in their communities. A report on the workshops was made to Council.

Council coordinated provincial government observance of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and the government component of the Purple Ribbon campaign.

1997-98

Council updated and released a second edition of *Making Changes: A Book for Women in Abusive Relationships* to meet numerous requests from transition house workers, advocates, and others who provide assistance to women in abusive relationships. Council decided to publish a new and revised version of the successful first edition, which had run out because of high demand.

In compiling information for the second edition, Council found that there was a lot of new information about police procedures, legal matters, and programs like Child Support Guidelines and the Maintenance Enforcement Program to be included. The booklet provides practical, plain language information and advice for women in abusive relationships. The booklet was distributed province-wide to transition houses, women's centres, police, community groups, and hospitals. *Making Changes* is also available in French, Braille, and on audio tapes.

Council partnered with the Canadian Congress of Black Women and the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health for a high-level inter-ministerial delegation of South African women in mid-October 1997. Council coordinated the Halifax leg of the South African Officials' Study Tour on Violence Against Women which was led by Dr. Tshabalala-Msimang, the Deputy Minister of Justice for the Republic of South Africa.

Council joined with the Human Rights Commission, the Department of Education and Culture, the Halifax Regional School Board, and various community groups to form CASH, the Coalition Against Sexual Harassment in Schools. The purpose of the organization is to develop a program to prevent sexual harassment against students in Nova Scotia schools.

Council coordinated provincial government observance of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and the government component of the Purple Ribbon campaign.

Goal: To improve the health and well-being of women and their families.

1995-96

Council partnered with Planned Parenthood in the release of popular information pamphlets about a new help line for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth.

1996-97

The president of Council was contracted to research and write a discussion paper on sexual and reproductive health and rights for the Canada/USA Women's Health Forum to be held in August 1996 in Ottawa. The paper, *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Canada*, was subsequently published in the proceedings of the forum.

Council provided support to Planned Parenthood in releasing its *Just Loosen Up and Start Talking* report and assisted Planned Parenthood in bringing the issues raised in the report to relevant government departments.

Council participated in and provided support for the Smoke Free Nova Scotia project.

Council supported a funding proposal to the Women's Health Bureau, Health Canada, for the development of a Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. Researchers at Dalhousie University, in partnership with various community organizations, developed the proposal. Council was invited to participate on the interim steering committee and to advise on community participation in the newly funded centre.

1997-98

Council participated in round table discussions organized by Planned Parenthood and the Department of Health to discuss follow-up on Planned Parenthood's *Just Loosen Up and Start Talking* report.

Council participated in several projects and committees relating to the organization and development of the newly funded Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.

In partnership with the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health and the IWK Grace Hospital, Council began planning a survey to examine the gender implications of the relationship between unpaid and paid work, care giving, empowerment, and health status in Nova Scotia.

PUBLICATIONS

In addition to its formal briefs and submissions, Council also published the following documents during the reporting period.

- *Who Will Speak for Us? A Consultation with Nova Scotia Women*
July 1994
- *Women and Social Security Reform: A Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development*
December 1994
- *Submission to the Law Amendments Committee Regarding the Maintenance Enforcement Act*
December 1994
- *Take Our Daughters to Work Day* (brochure)
May 1995
- *Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs Regarding Bill C-68: The Firearms Act*
July 1995
- *Women and Legal Aid: Access to Justice*, A Joint Submission by Coverdale Court Work Services, Nova Scotia Association of Women and the Law, and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
March 1996
- *Working More for Less: The Restructuring of Unemployment Insurance in Canada*
April 1996
- *Letting in a Little Light: Lesbians and Their Families in Nova Scotia*
May 1996
- *A Profile of Poverty in Nova Scotia*
February 1997
- *A Provincial Women's Forum: Challenge to Change* (Final Report)
April 1997
- *Brief to the Federal Standing Committee on Finance*
October 1997
- *Brief to the Select Committee on National Unity*
January 1998
- *Making Changes: A Handbook for Women in Abusive Relationships*
January 1998